

Ser. No. 09/992,172

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Proposed New Claim

18. (New) A shell casing for enclosing a tape measure comprising:

a first shell;

a second shell;

an attachment element that attaches said first shell to said second shell thereby enclosing the tape measure, said casing having a bottom surface that rests on an object to be measured and having a vertical recess at its front portion;

an indicator window located in the vertical recess and having an indication mark positioned to be in line with measurement increments arranged on said tape measure;

an exit slot disposed near the bottom surface of said casing and through which the tape measure slides out;

a marker housing integrally formed with said casing and disposed proximate the vertical recess and adjacent to said casing such that a bottom surface of said marker housing is substantially coplanar with the bottom surface of said casing to minimize the vertical distance of the tape measure from the object to be measured, said marker housing receiving a marker wherein the marker is aligned with the indication mark in said indicator window, and the marker housing and the marker are positioned above the bottom surface of said casing so as to allow marking of the object at the measurement increment that is in line with the indication mark using one and only one hand.

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September 7, 2004 6:07 PM